



Claims Conference Holocaust Survivor Memoir Collection

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Mein Verfolgungsschicksal

I was born in Szczakowa, Poland on November 6, 1928. Till 1939 I had a normal childhood within an affluent loving family circle with an extended family of wonderful grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. With the German invasion of Poland my normal life became completely interrupted. First my father was killed by the Gestapo, then my education came to a standstill since Jews were forbidden to attend public schools. My mother with my sister and me moved to our grandparents to Ost Oberschlesien Niemce/Ostrowy near Dabrowa where we stayed till 1941. In 1941 together with other Jews from the place we were moved to a neighboring village Czarne Morze, an open ghetto which we were forbidden to leave. Somewhere at the end of the year or beginning of 1942 we were moved again to Strzemieszyce also Ostoberschlesien, which was incorporated into das III Reich. There we were eventually isolated in a closed ghetto. We worked at Eisenwerke Skopek-Blecheri & Schwerbetrieb. I worked in a stockroom Warehouse for the Schwerbetrieb. We walked every day several kilometers to and from the factory. Several families lived in every house. I, my mother, and sister had one small room. Food was rationed and limited.

On June 26, 1943 came the final Aussiedlung. Before dawn in the morning SS Truppen marched into the ghetto, rounded up all Jews and marched them to the Zammelpunkt at the gates of the ghetto. On the way screams of the SS intermingled with the screams of the beaten, kicked, and tortured victims. Dead bodies were left unattended all over the ghetto. At the Zammelpunkt we were ordered to stand in pairs in line in front of the SS officers. As we came in front of the officer in charge of the selection, he would point us to the left or to the right. One direction was to a slave labor camp, the other to a death camp. Since that direction was provided for older or infirmed people or small children we knew where they were being taken.

My sister was separated from us since she worked the night shift. My mother and I were sent to Ottmuth bei Annaberg to a slave labor camp (Oberschlesien). We were only women, the men were in a separate camp. We lived in barracks in a camp supervised by the German Wehrmacht subjected to whims of an unstable SS woman Kommandant who would run through the barracks at all hours hitting people with a Peitche, or inflicting punitive Appels for imaginary insubordination. We worked in the Otta Schufabrik and walked to and from the factory several kilometers. The conditions were below human habitat and food was below starvation level. I became very sick and twice had pneumonia and typhus.

But nothing had prepared us for the next KZ Ludwigsdorf where we were sent in early Spring of 1944. The KZ was under the supervision of the SS. Double electric barbed wire surrounded the camp and always present SS in a tower were watching us. It was a dismal place. The stink in the KZ was overpowering, the ground seemed always to be muddy. We lived in barracks of approximately 30-50 women in double or triple bunks without heating. Ludwigsdorf in the mountains of Niederschlesien, it belonged to central of Gross Rosen according to our knowledge, a death camp. The diet was black so called

coffee, water soup, a piece of bread resembling lime, sometimes a square of margarine or a spoonful of sugar.

We worked within the mountain where munition factories were located. We walked to and from the factories several kilometers (it seemed like forever) under the guard of SS women with dogs. I worked soldering underwater mines or at other times on various powder presses for ammunition production. The powders were grey, green and yellow reddish brown which was highly poisonous. The powders were absorbed by the skin of the person according to the color and was noxious to the respiratory passages. In our camp people did not resemble human beings but rather some macabre creatures who were grey, green, and yellow orange. Entering the mountain each day I had a feeling of entering hell where only the damned existed. The factories had many levels connected with steps. We were searched upon entering and leaving. We wore grey striped apron like coats with a yellow star on the front and on the back. We were starved, exploited, punished without a reason with appals - standing for hours in camp after work while our habitat were being searched. We were beaten, humiliated and degraded. It was a dismal existence without hope that lead only to death.

